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A FEW WORDS

TO

THE SOLDIERS

OF THE

CONFEDERATE STATES.

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A FEW WORDS

TO THE

Soldiers of the Confederate States.

It is related that as, on a certain occasion some years past, in England, a party of gentlemen were dining together, among the company were found a colonel of the army and a bishop of the Church of England. The colonel, like, as he presumed, a true son of Mars, fain would wage war upon the son of the Church; but as it would have been a violation of military courtesy to make a direct personal attack upon him, he determined to thrust at him through the cloak of religion, and thus take him at disadvantage. In the course of conversation, the colonel let drop many bitter inuendoes and insinuations against religion in general, without any apparent effect upon his intended victim; at length, piqued at his ill success, he observed that the only rational prayer he ever heard, proceeded from the lips of an officer just on the eve of a battle; he repeated it as follows: "O God, if there be a God, have mercy upon my soul, if I have a soul. Amen." There ensued a deep silence, and all eyes seemed to turn upon the bishop in expectation of a reply to this scarcely covert attack upon religion, both natural and revealed. He gravely, and without any apparent emotion, observed, that he had heard of, in his humble opinion, a far more reasonable and proper one, uttered under precisely similar circumstances, by a private soldier, viz. "O Lord God, if in the heat of action I forget thee, do thou not forget me. Amen."

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The prompt, decided unanimity of preference given by the company to the simple piety and manly fervor of the latter over the cold and cheerless scepticism of the former prayer (if prayer it can be termed), was a mortifying repulse to the insolent unbeliever, whose lips were completely closed.

While reflecting upon this anecdote, it suggested itself to the writer that the following dialogue between an old pious sergeant of the revolutionary line, and a clever private in the army of the present day, might prove neither an unapt nor a weak commentary upon it,

Sergeant. Well, Thomas, I see you are in the service of the Confederate States.

Soldier. Yes, I took on about a year ago.

Serg. You soldiers of the present day have far easier times than we old continentals.

Sold. Be it so or not, we think our situation might be bettered.

Serg. Come, now, let us compare new with old a little; perhaps you will be more content with your lot.

Sold. I have no objection.

Serg. First and foremost, you're better paid, clothed and fed. In the Revolution we received but a scanty stipend at best, and that came very irregularly, large balances still remaining due; besides, it was in old continental money—mere rags compared in actual value with the bank notes you are paid with. Our food was miserable in quality, often in a spoiled condition, and so scant that we were oftener starving than otherwise, and as to clothing, we more nearly resembled scarecrows than regulars—many were blanketless, and during our sad retreat through the Jerseys, our army could have been traced by our men's shoeless and often bloody tracks.

Sold. Is it possible! Those were hard times, in truth. And did none mutiny?

Serg. Mutiny! Ah, we had no time for that. We were continually in motion or in action; but above all, our poor fellows were full of patriotism, and thought far less of their own sufferings than of their country's wrongs. Now, I dare say, Thomas—I mean no offence to you—were Congress to reduce the pay of their sol-

diers now, and to order them upon hard and dangerous service, with scanty clothing and short allowance, they might mutiny.

Sold. I think you are hard on us, my old friend.

Serg. Not a whit, not a whit, Thomas. Pardon an old veteran's bluntness, but human nature is human nature still; however, I speak not without observation. A year or more ago, I spent some months with a granddaughter of mine who is married, and lives in the vicinity of Fort * * * *; like all old soldiers who love to

"Shoulder a crutch, and show how fields were won,"

I was attracted by the rattle of the drum, and frequently visited the fort, where I formed an acquaintance with the non-commissioned officers and some of the privates. Thus, you see, I had opportunity of seeing and hearing how things are carried on in these times. Upon the word of an old soldier, they compare but illy with old times.

Sold. No doubt, in your opinion, old folks are sadly prejudiced, one and all.

Serg. Perhaps so, but let us see the result of my discoveries at Fort * * * *. First of all, desertions were of every-day's occurrence, and the most trifling causes were alleged. When I expressed my honest indignation at so base, so unsoldierly a crime, forsooth I was laughed at. What! exclaimed I, is it no crime to forswear one's self? to be false to our Maker and to our country at the same time? I was only mocked at the more. Bitter taunts were uttered against religion, and as to patriotism, scarcely one knew what it meant. Now, tell me, whether such men, if exposed to the privations cheerfully borne by my brave and trusty old comrades, in "times which tried men's souls," would be likely to stand by their colors.

Sold. I must candidly say, I fear not; and moreover, I regret I cannot say that desertions are less frequent at my station.

Serg. Drunkenness, too, to a beastly degree, commonly prevailed at Fort ****, and was not looked upon in general by the men as disgraceful; indeed, it was deemed manly to make light of it; and when a man

was punished on account of some crime he had committed while drunk, he was viewed as a kind of martyr, because his excuse of "being a 'little *high*,' and did'nt know what he was doing" was not taken. And as to the long-delayed and mild inflictions of a modern court-martial, compared with the prompt, efficacious sentence of an old drum-head, they only appeared to provoke ridicule—every drill and parade the ranks were sure to be disordered, till one or more staggering soldier was sent to the guard-house—sometimes when a crowd of ladies and gentlemen were present as spectators, this shameful exhibition took place; but I never found that those guilty were at all pointed at, or considered dishonored by their comrades. But, however men may regard so vile a habit, the words of the Bible will ever be found true in the end—At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Prov. xxiii, 32.

Sold. How is that, pray?

Serg. Do you ask? but you are a young soldier yet. Why, the "*mania a potu*" as the doctors call it—the horrors—the being confined on bread and water in a bomb-proof, etc., are rather biting. Then, squandering their wages, destroying their constitutions, bringing on chronic disorders and bilious fevers—being tempted to steal, lie, and desert—being often discharged, and shamefully drummed out of service as confirmed sots—all these are capable of stinging to the quick as to the present life; and as to that to come, the Bible declares that "the drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Sold. These things appear very wrong, without going so much to the Bible; that will do very well for nervous old women—they are far readier subjects to be priest-ridden than we soldiers.

Serg. Surely, Thomas, you don't mean to cast disrespect upon the Bible! You read it, sometimes, of course?

Sold. Not I, indeed; not since I was a boy at home: though there are a number on the mantel-piece in my barrack-room.

Serg. Not read God's Word, in a Christian country? and why, indeed?

Sold. You call it the Word of God. I am not sure that it is; nor, in truth, am I altogether certified that there is such a being.

Serg. Amazing! Why, Thomas, you astonish me quite; what, has not your chaplain taken the pains to instruct — but what do I say; perhaps you have no chaplain in your regiment.

Sold. No, indeed, we don't allow such folks to humbug us.

Serg. More's the pity of you, and shame upon it. But ah! the old continental Congress and General Washington, God bless their memory, thought differently; so did my old Colonel C, and Captain M. Many and oft are the times that I have seen the general's staff, and the several regimental staffs, standing with hats doffed, while our chaplain offered up. by order of Congress, at the head of the army drawn up in hollow square, thanksgivings for our past successes, and implored a blessing upon our arms for the future—ah! believe me, it did us good, it was a cordial to our harrassed minds, and nerved anew our wearied bodies for battle in our country's cause.

Sold. Sergeant, you are eloquent: but that was many years ago—things are altered now; people are wiser. We are troubled with little praying or preaching in our regiment, and as to the Bibles and Testaments, which the societies furnish gratis (I can't tell how), their leaves are more torn out than read.

Serg. Yes, many years ago; and then we were familiar with want and danger, were living from hand to mouth, with no other shelter oftentimes but the sky above; were literally naked, hungry and thirsty most of the time, and no man could tell when he might fall for his country—thus were we led by a sense of our frailty, peril and want, to look upward for help and strength.

Sold. That seems all reasonable. You were on severe, honorable and dangerous duty, and were always employed; but in time of inaction we, for the sake of excitement, visit the sutlers, or the numerous grog-shops which are by *law provided for the weary* and *the thirsty traveller* within a stone's cast, and stupify ourselves with beer, or get "*high*" upon gin or whiskey, as it is

termed, in order to be lowered below the level of the brute.

Serg. Much *more,* therefore, do you need moral instruction. It is said somewhere, "that idleness is the root of all evil." But if I remember aright, you doubted awhile back the being of a God.

Sold. Not altogether; but only that I am not quite sure in my own mind.

Serg. When I call to mind, Thomas, your worthy, pious parents, who are both now reaping above the fruits of their faith and obedience, it grieves me to the bottom of my heart to find a child of their's so unbelieving. Most willingly would I spend hours, nay, days, to instruct you in my poor way, if I believed you sincerely desirous of learning; but do not play upon an old soldier for the purpose of scoffiing, I beg of you, Thomas—that would be unmanly.

Sold. I fear I have, my worthy old friend, given you just grounds to suspect me from talking heedlessly; in sober truth, I have latterly associated with so many infidels and bad men as to have caught their slang; but there are moments, and you have touched upon one, when better feelings come over me: then the early lessons taught me by my beloved parents are remembered, and I feel that I lost them before I was well prepared to withstand the temptations of the world. Not to detain you, I do wish some instruction as to God, and in regard to the Bible, that I may have somewhat to oppose to the boasted scepticism of too many of my companions.

Serg. Now you talk like the son of a pious father, as you are; and if you will be a patient listener to an old man who desires your best good, I will endeavor to give you some homely information on such important points as those in question.

As to a God—without going to the Bible—common sense tells me that all the objects which I see or feel, about, above, and below me, on the earth and in the skies, are manifestly to my senses so adapted to each other, so fitted for the purposes to which they are naturally applied, that some all-wise, all-powerful being, far superior to man, must have planned and made them so. For a plain example, you once knew how to manage a

patent plough, as you now do to handle a fire-lock; but you yourself can neither manufacture them nor have you seen them fabricated. Now, tell me, when you compare their several parts — wood work, share and coulter of the one, and barrel, stock, lock and ramrod of the other, and see how well adjusted they are, and when joined together, how admirably they accomplish certain useful ends, do you doubt that some far more skilful man, personally unknown to you, some time or other has made them.

Sold. I do not.

Serg. Now, it is related that when the early Mexicans first beheld the Spanish ships, with swelled canvass, approach their shores, and afterwards perceived the terrible report and deadly effect of their cannon and small arms, they believed the gods whom they worshipped were come down in human shape. A watch, too, with its nice work, its regular and animated motions, has been found to strike savages with the idea of superior wisdom and power; though they ignorantly consider the power to dwell in the watch itself.

Sold. These ideas are quite novel to me, though very simple.

Serg. Take a more familiar object still: look upon your hand—is it not wonderfully contrived for all the uses to which you put it: to provide the body with food; to dress and cook it; to convey it to the mouth; to manufacture, fit and put on clothes; to defend the body; to handle the plough and the gun; to wield the axe; to build, guide and manage ships; to write, to sew, etc., etc.? Behold your other members: your eyes, how keen their vision, how delicate their formation, and how well fortified from injury, and covered from the lightest dust; your ear, so sensitive to the smallest noise, and yet capable of sustaining the loudest; your tongue, to aid mastication, and to speak withal, etc. Now, who made them thus? Did your father make them? and so on to Adam. Who made him, and of what? Who, but that all-wise, almighty Being we call and adore as GOD, formed man of the dust of the earth?

Sold. I see not how to deny your reasoning, or that its conclusion can be refuted. What you have said is sim-

ple enough, and yet is more convincing than anything I have heard.

Serg. Because it is the simple truth, and we are not left to bewildering chance. But "enough," they say, "is a feast;" I will not weary you with more, but go at once to the Bible.

Sold. Aye, do so, and explain how it is the word of GOD, as you termed it awhile past. That seems mysterious to me, how GOD should have spoken to man, whom he made!

Serg. That's somewhat owing to your mistaking my meaning. I have called it GOD's Word; but not that every word and sentence was spoken directly or dictated to mankind by GOD himself; but that men were raised up and inspired by him from time to time with the substance of its several parts, the language being their own chiefly. Let the Bible speak for itself—"Holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST." 2 Peter i, 21. It is divided you know into two parts, the Old and the New Testaments; I will describe them separately.

Sold. Do so, I'm all attention.

Serg. The Old Testament consists of the books written by Moses, and by various leaders, judges and prophets of the Jews who succeeded him. They treat of the creation of the world, the flood, and the history of mankind from Adam to Abraham, and from him of the history, laws, rites and worship of their nation down to about 400 years before CHRIST.

These legislators and prophets in their writings claim to have performed miraculous acts before the whole nation, and as they ever appealed to them as the proofs of the divine source of the laws, precepts and prophecies they delivered to their countrymen, therefore, the acknowledgment by the latter of their writings as the true annals or history of their nation, is a conclusive testimony to the truth of the miracles performed by them, as well as to the inspiration of their several messages; since GOD alone could give power of working miracles.

Sold. Pray give me a distinct explanation of the word "*miraculous.*"

Serg. It means something done contrary to or superior

to the usual laws or course of nature—such as healing the sick, raising the dead at a word, with a touch, etc. Another unanswerable evidence is to be found in their predictions, exactly foretelling particular future events, as to nations and as to individuals—the judgments of GOD upon their own nation, and the pagan people around them—the rise and history of particular men—to the nicest degree, thousands of years before their fulfilment.

Sold. Give me an example or two?

Serg. I approve of your curiosity much, and will cheerfully gratify it;—there was the Babylonish captivity—that the Jews for disobedience to GOD'S precepts should be conquered by the King of Babylon, their temple be destroyed, and themselves carried captives to Babylon—that after remaining there a number of years, they would be restored to liberty and to their native land, and enabled to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple; again their continued idolatry and wickedness, and their final subjugation by the Romans.

The coming of CHRIST, and particular events in his personal history, viz: to be born of a virgin—to be of David's family—to be born in Bethlehem—to ride into Jerusalem upon an ass—to be a man of sorrows—to be sold for thirty pieces of silver—to be scourged, buffetted and spit upon—to be numbered with malefactors, that is, to be crucified between two thieves—to have gall and vinegar given him to drink—to be mocked while hanging on the cross—to have lots cast for his garments—to make his grave with the rich—and to rise from the dead on the third day without corruption. Isa. liii; Dan. ix, 26. It was foretold that CHRIST should perform many notable and beneficial miracles—that the "eyes of the blind should be opened"—"the ears of the deaf unstopped"—"the lame man leap as a hart," and "the tongue of the dumb sing." Isa. xxxv, 5. It was also predicted that he should appear before the sceptre departed from Judah, that is, the final overthrow of the Jewish government by the Romans.

Sold. But how do you know that these facts were not written after they had occurred.

Serg. I have told you already that the Jews had acknowledged for ages before CHRIST came, the Books of

the Old Testament as their national annals, containing the prophecies I have just mentioned. They guarded them with the most watchful care, and to prevent the smallest alteration or addition, even counted the number of the words or letters: they handed them down from father to son, from generation to generation, as their true national history—as the genuine writings of their prophets, legislators, etc. There could have been no possibility of being deceived as to their authenticity or date. As Christianity is founded upon the fulfilment in CHRIST of the predictions contained in these books, the Christians have ever referred to them as the foundation of their faith; the Jews, who were mortal enemies and opponents to CHRIST and his followers, and are so in their scattered state to this day, would not contend for the truth of the very words of the Old Testament (though they deny CHRIST), unless the universal and perpetual testimony of their nation, from Moses down, had established their genuineness beyond doubt.

Sold. I think I have kept with you so far. Now, I wish some more particular account of their actual fulfilment.

Serg. This exactly brings us to the New Testament. We have laid the foundation, and will now proceed to the Gospel superstructure; I hope you are tolerably persuaded in your own mind as to the divine origin, and of course the truth of the Old Scriptures, that "*holy men of* GOD" did "*speak*" therein "*as they were moved by the* HOLY GHOST." The Gospel, or glad tidings as it means, of peace and good-will from GOD to sinful men, shows how GOD's free and sovereign mercy and the glorious plan of man's redemption flowing from it, were declared, exemplified and fulfilled in JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.

Sold. Yes, I do wish to know something clear and intelligible about a person whose name I have heard oftener blasphemed in the army than reverenced, and of whom I have heard preachers assert hard things.

Serg. What, for example?

Sold. Why, calling him GOD at one time and man at another.

Serg. Preachers often confound leading doctrines

without distinguishing between, and showing their relation one to another. Now, they only stated the truth in these declarations.

Sold. I am astonished in my turn. I should think this to border on blasphemy.

Serg. Precisely what the Jews said when CHRIST claimed to be divine.

Sold. What, did he claim to be divine to the Jews?

Serg. Yes, to their very faces, and proved it, too.

Sold. And how, pray?

Serg. By opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the deaf ears, raising the dead, etc., as foretold in prophecy.

Sold. You have surely forgotten that you said the same of the legislators, leaders and prophets: and they were not divine.

Serg. No, I have not; far from it. These last, when they delivered their messages to the Jews, were careful to say, "The LORD of Hosts saith," "The LORD commandeth," etc., and always appealed in a solemn manner to JEHOVAH to give miraculous attestation to their words as his inspired message, on some sign on their part, as when (Exod. vii, 19) Aaron stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and its fearful plagues ensued; when the Amalekites fought with Israel, and were worsted when Moses held up "the rod of GOD in his hands," but victorious whenever, through heaviness, he let it down. Exod. xvii, 11, 12. When the wall of Jericho fell down at the sound of Joshua's trumpets. Josh. vi. When the Prophet Elijah contended with the priests of Baal, and erected an altar, and put wood and a bullock thereon, and dug a trench around about it, and poured water upon it, and prayed, "O LORD GOD of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art GOD in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word," etc. "Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed it," in the sight of all the people. 1 Kings xviii, 20–38. But CHRIST says to the tempestuous sea, "Peace, be still," and the elements are hushed; to the palsied, "Arise and walk;" to the leper, "I will, be thou clean;" to the widow's son, "young man, I say unto thee, Arise;"

and to the nobleman, "Thy son liveth," etc.: don't you see the difference?

Sold. Yes, CHRIST speaks as one who commands and is obeyed in his own right: but have you not digressed from the chief matter in hand?

Serg. Somewhat; but owing to your own invitation: we will return to the Gospel.

The history of the life and ministry of CHRIST is mainly contained in the four gospels or books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which, though in separate narratives, give most impartially, and with winning simplicity, a connected and harmonious history of the birth, actions, precepts, death, resurrection, and ascension of CHRIST. These men were poor and unlearned fishermen—two of whom, the first and the last, were amongst CHRIST's immediate disciples. How can we account then that these simple narratives of so many interesting, wonderful, and supernatural events; so many pure and heavenly doctrines and precepts, unknown before to the most eminent human sages and moralists, and subversive of the most favored prejudices of both Jews and Pagans, could have been sustained against the incredulity, the inveterate and bitter hostility of the whole world, save "a small sect everywhere spoken against;" could have disseminated the Christian faith and doctrine among so many kindreds, tongues and people, for above 1,800 years, and are even now being multiplied by the power of the press, beyond enumeration, for circulation over the whole earth, unless from the truth of the facts contained in them, indelibly impressed upon the minds of the more civilized nations of the globe—unless the chain of testimony from the Old Testament to the New, and thence through the Church of CHRIST down to us has remained unbroken, and proof against the malice of wicked angels and men.

The testimony of Jewish and Heathen writers corroborates, in the chief particulars, and controverts in none, the plain narratives of the humble fishermen of Galilee; the great, the wise, the learned and the good, have reposed their faith upon them as the inspired repository of divine revelation in every age: and what is far more, the authors themselves, and their fellows the primitive

Christians, staked their lives upon their truth, and were given some to the sword, some to the cross, and some to the fiery stake.

The writers of the New Testament state themselves to have been present at the miraculous events they describe, and would not have risked their lives unless satisfied beyond doubt by the testimony of their senses, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching, of the truth of what they affirm. Is it reasonable to think that any man would expose himself to the most sure, cruel persecution and suffering, and finally peril his life, upon a falsehood?

Sold. Not at all, I'm free to admit. Well, my good old friend I am obliged to you for your brief, but most clear and interesting account of the Bible, and will now thank you to return to the nature of CHRIST. What you have already said seems to me very strange and mysterious.

Serg. Well may it do so, when the inspired St. Paul writes in his epistle to Timothy, "Great is the mystery of godliness. GOD was manifest in the flesh," etc., but it is plainly written in the Bible, and if we do indeed believe that to be the word of GOD, we must believe it, though in its nature it be out of the reach of, but not contrary to, our understandings.

Sold. Can a man believe what he does not comprehend?

Serg. We do believe many things we do not understand nor can explain fully: for example, we believe that when we sow any kind of seed it will, in due season, take root downward, spring up, blossom, and bear fruit; but we do not comprehend how God, who said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind" (Gen. i, 11), performs so wonderful an operation. We believe, unless a miracle intervene, the sun will rise to-morrow; but do we understand how God will cause the earth to turn round upon its axis, that the sun may apparently rise to us? I might add many more examples, but will only draw a conclusion from what has been already said. We see the works of creation; we behold their order, method, fitness; we behold unerring wisdom in their

plan, almighty power in their execution; we, therefore, acknowledge and adore GOD, but we understand not his manner of existence.

Sold. I see you are right, and that we fain must believe many things we cannot comprehend; but I interrupt you.

Serg. The Bible declares that all men are, in the sight of GOD, sinners, and under the curse of the perfect law of GOD, which declareth, "*The soul that sinneth it shall die.*" And, my young friend, can our own consciences, or our own observation, assure us that we, individually, or our relations and associates, are not sinners against the pure laws and precepts of our Maker, our Preserver, our Master, and our King? And when GOD, who cannot lie, solemnly tells us in his Word that we are all found wanting, and condemned, and under sentence by this law, shall we rather believe the world, and our own deceitful hearts, and be at peace, *when* "*to the wicked there is no peace?*" when the wrath of GOD "who made," and "who can as easily destroy," is gathering above our guilty heads?

But whatever we may think, the truth of GOD is pledged—we must all die—'tis true we must, from the mortality of our bodies, sooner or later crumble into dust: but our souls must stand before the bar of GOD—a justly offended GOD!

Now, my fellow sinner, I ask you solemnly, between you and myself alone, and GOD who hears us, how can you and I escape that searching trial of our most secret thoughts, our idle and profane words, our evil deeds? Who shall plead for us there, and make atonement for our sins? There is neither angel or man worthy enough, or of sufficient dignity, to expiate the universal violation of GOD's holy laws by our race—for "GOD chargeth the angels themselves with folly." Job iv, 18.

The Prophet Isaiah saith: "And he saw that *there was no* man, and wondered that *there was* no intercessor: therefore, his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." Isaiah lix, 16. Yes, GOD's mercy and goodness "have laid help upon *one that is* mighty. Psa. lxxxix, 19. GOD, in the person of his only-begotten Son, JESUS CHRIST, took upon him our

nature, that human nature which had sinned;—CHRIST, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament which went before on him, "was born of a virgin," and "became a man of sorrows"—he was poor and despised, he was persecuted, calumniated, betrayed, scourged, spit upon, and crucified as a malefactor; but he was without sin, and fulfilled in every point the divine laws which our race had all broken, and "once made by his body upon the cross, a full, perfect and complete satisfaction and atonement" for all men. But he was GOD as well as man; therefore, when he spoke it was "as never man spake:" it was, "Verily I say," and when he commanded, "lo! the winds and the sea obey him," it was as when GOD in the beginning said, "Let there be light, and there was light."

In the Bible we find the names and attributes of GOD bestowed upon CHRIST, as well as the name, character, and physical infirmities of man: he must needs be, therefore, GOD and man, or the Scriptures are untrue. But, pray, is it a whit more marvellous for Almighty Power to unite his own self-existent nature with the human nature created by him, in the person of the holy child JESUS, than that he should have formed man of the dust, and have breathed into him a living soul?

Sold. Both are, in truth, beyond our comprehension. Did you mean, when you stated just now that CHRIST made a full atonement for all men, that all are without exception pardoned on account of it?

Serg. Alas! no. St. Peter says, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. Acts x, 43. To believe in him is the condition on which sins are remitted. I will explain this by a kind of parable. Suppose a number of persons confined in jail under sentence of death for some notable offence, and some benevolent and great man interests himself in their behalf, and, after much entreaty, obtains from government the lives of the prisoners; but on condition that they sign a solemn pledge to remove, by a certain day, from the country forever. If these persons do not put faith in this promise, and refuse to sign the pledge, or if, after signing it, they should begin to think that government

would wink at their remaining after the appointed day, and should fail to go, they would justly be put to death under their original sentence, would they not?

Sold. To be sure.

Serg. The Bible (you do not wonder now, I see, as you did, at my frequent reference to this book) declares that CHRIST "died for our sins, and rose again for our justification."

1st. That our actual sins should be pardoned, in virtue of his bearing the punishment due unto them, in the same nature as our own, and of his perfect obedience to the perfectly pure laws we have violated, conditional upon our hearty trust in him as our sole, all-efficient Saviour, and upon our "bringing forth fruits meet for repentance." Matt. iii, 8. CHRIST died to save us from, and not in our sins. St. Paul says, "But if, while we seek to be justified by CHRIST, we ourselves also are found sinners, is, therefore, CHRIST the minister of sin? GOD forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." Gal. ii, 17, 18. As if those criminals mentioned above should return whence they were banished, and commit the same or other offences, surely the mediation of their intercessor would be of no more avail. Does this seem clear to your mind?

Sold. Quite so; but, alas! who can cease from sin? who can be perfect?

Serg. None—not the greatest saints; but far less they who rely upon any fancied goodness or strength of their own: only they who seek aright that supernatural and spiritual aid CHRIST has promised, will be delivered from the power of it, and enabled "to work out their salvation with fear and trembling?"

Sold. What aid is that?

Serg. The help of the HOLY SPIRIT, to inspire us with good thoughts and holy resolutions, and to strengthen us to fulfil them.

Sold. That's to my mind fanatical.

Serg. It is the doctrine of the Bible, and a vital one; and what is surprising in it, since the great heathen moralists and sages, Plato and Socrates, acknowledged man's need of divine instruction? We have now a

divine revelation, and that assures us that GOD will (St. Luke xi, 13) "give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him," to impress the truths of that revelation upon their minds and hearts. GOD, who formed our spirits within us, can, assuredly, in secret influence them by his own Spirit. You call it fanatical, and so does the world; but it has been, and ever is, the most comfortable animating doctrine of the Jewish church, from David "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," and of the Church of CHRIST, from its institution.

Sold. I own that I have thought little on it: I always slighted it as mere enthusiasm and cant.

Serg. I pray that you may henceforth regard it as a most reasonable and comforting truth—may experience its holy adaptation to your own necessities as a sinful, and weak pilgrim on earth—a prodigal son far away from his father's house, desiring to return thither, but fearing to do so? Did a Christian, during his perilous warfare with enemies without and foes within, doubt it for a moment, he would be in despair, as any man would have been in our revolutionary struggles, who exercised no faith in a superintending Providence.

Sold. You believe, then, that it may be had, if prayed for.

Serg. Certainly, if GOD sees that it is asked in a humble, teachable frame of mind.

Sold. But how shall one know if his prayer be answered?

Serg. "And he said, So is the kingdom of GOD, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." Mark iv, 26, 27. "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Gal. vi, 9. "For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off," etc. GOD has promised, and will certainly perform, to you and to me, and to all who will humbly and importunately call upon him.

Sold. I know not how, in general, the revolutionary soldiers regarded this doctrine; but, my old friend, the soldiers of the present day would mock at and deride it, and I incline to think some of the officers would laugh

at it as an old woman's tale. Why, I have heard of more than one as having said that religion might do for citizens well enough, but that soldiers had no business with it.

Serg. It is hardly to be wondered that the majority of private soldiers, who are mostly unlearned men and without the benefit of instruction, either mental or spiritual, with no chaplain to care for their souls, should ignorantly deride what they do not understand, and have not given a serious thought to; but I am unwilling to suppose, for a moment, that any well-informed officers of our army, who have received at the West Point Academy, founded under Gen. Washington's auspices, a sound mathematical education, and are qualified thereby to make an accurate and intelligent examination of the evidences of Christianity, besides having abundant leisure in time of peace, would set so unwise an example to the poor soldiers whom GOD has put under them, as to hoot at what they have been at no pains to investigate. Such a state of things, if at all true, and you are not misinformed, is surely deplorable. Now, how worthy of imitation the conduct, as simply portrayed in Scripture, of two Roman centurions (or captains). The one mentioned in the seventh chapter of St. Luke, though born a Pagan, has exhibited an instance of perhaps the most intelligent yet humble faith on record, which our Saviour at the moment commended, "as greater than any he had found in Israel;" that nation of whom it was said, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." He had heard of JESUS' miracles, and far from doubting, or from attributing them, as did the Jews, to diabolic influences, he thus expressed through his friends a humble reliance upon the Saviour: "Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee, but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." The other is described in Acts x, 2, as "a devout man, and one that feared GOD with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to GOD always." Unto him GOD gave the glorious distinction of becoming, through angelic agency, the first baptized convert from the Gentiles; and that his example was blessed to the soldiers under him, may be seen from the seventh

verse of the same chapter. And it was a centurion, who, when CHRIST expired on the cross, seeing his magnanimous submission to so ignominious a death, gave that noble and ingenuous attestation to his divine character and claim, "*Truly this man was the Son of* GOD."

Sold. Most beautiful examples, truly; I confess with shame I never noticed them before. I must read my Bible more.

Serg. Ah, my young friend, I am an old, superannuated veteran; my earthly battles, in one sense, are long since over; I have outlived many of my relatives, and the associates of my youth and manhood; my toils and pleasures are alike past, my sun is about to set: but I thank GOD that I have my Bible, and sight enough to read its consolatory, animating promises, and assurances of a better world to come. I trust that when the time arrives, as soon it must, for my poor crazy limbs to be laid in a soldier's honored grave, I will be able humbly to say as a soldier of JESUS CHRIST, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," etc. Sincerely do I pray that you may also find within the sacred pages, "the pearl of great price." CHRIST says, "Search the Scriptures; they are they which testify of me." John v, 39.

Sold. I am too much your debtor, my good old friend, to neglect your kind admonitions; depend upon it, I will not put them from me as before.

Serg. But as there are many things contained therein hard to understand, and which we may "wrest to our own destruction;" many things opposed to our corrupt and evil propensities; pray secretly to GOD to enlighten your mind and influence your heart by his Holy Spirit, and to give you such a teachable disposition, that the blessing of CHRIST may rest upon you. To the incredulous Thomas, he said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." St. John xx, 29.

Sold. I cannot, if I would, gainsay your advice; I have lived like a heathen, I confess, without prayer of any kind.

Serg. And, therefore, fell unresistingly into the ranks

of cold and cheerless infidelity. Why, the poor Pagans are very diligent in praying to stocks and stones, and shall Christian soldiers, in a gospel land, not pray to God their Maker, nor read his Word!

What would be the result, I ask, if soldiers read the holy and peaceful precepts of the Bible, and would pray to God for his Spirit to enable them to understand, to love, and obey them? Drunkenness, that bane of soldiers, gambling, lying, stealing, evil-speaking, desertion, waste of health, character, and pay, would all cease. Soldiers, instead of the character of idle, worthless sots, which the bad conduct of too many of their number causes their fellow citizens to entertain, would be looked upon as quiet, orderly, cleanly members of society. They would be obedient and respectful to their officers; friendly, kind, and at peace one with another; would perform their duties, "not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God." They would be content and frugal with their wages; would be satisfied with the warm and excellent clothing, and the wholesome food they are provided with; and as to the comforts and benefit of their post hospitals when sick, they would haply be without much opportunity of experiencing them, from their improved health of body and cheerfulness of mind. And if, in the dispensations of Providence, laid upon a bed of sickness and brought to death's door, their Bibles and their pious comrades would be their comfort; but above all, their habits of prayer would bring down assurances and consolations above what earth can give, and which, in moments of pain, and sickness, and death, neither infidel nor scoffer can intermeddle with.

Sold. Ah! my own brief experience tells me what a blessed aspect a garrison would put on under such circumstances. What a pleasant thing to be a soldier it would then be; every one would do his own share of duty, and not throw it upon his more innocent comrades by getting confined; the only strife, if such at all, would be who should excel as a ready and clean soldier.

Serg. Aye, aye, then "would the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose." (Isaiah xxxv, 1.) Every soldier would be a Christian gentleman. None by intoxication

or vulgar conduct would put himself on a par with the brute. Should war arise, what an army of heroes, of conscientious, high-principled Christian soldiers to defend our country! Mutiny, desertion, cowardice, drunkenness, and sleeping on duty, etc., would find no place. The banner under which they fight would be honored by such defenders, and they would deserve a general such as Washington, who, after the disastrous affairs of Brandywine and Germantown, while the army lay at Valley-Forge, during the severe winter of '77 and '78, in a very destitute condition, was in the frequent habit of visiting alone a secluded grove. This excited the curiosity of a neighboring Quaker gentleman, named Potts, who sided with the Tories, and led him to watch his movements on one of these occasions, till he perceived this great and good man upon his knees, and engaged in prayer: such was the impression made on him, that on returning home he related the circumstance to his family and exclaimed—"*Our cause is lost*," etc. Surely, when a man like Washington thus acted, no officer or soldier of our army should view himself as doing an unbecoming act, or as being justly open to ridicule in "praying to GOD always," and in all things setting a pious example to his fellow beings and companions in arms. GOD forbid.

Sold. A most striking example, indeed; one which no true-hearted Confederate soldier should hear without emotion. I pray never to forget it.

Serg. His wonderful preservation on Braddock's bloody field, and on other occasions—his calm and undismayed demeanor in the most gloomy and disheartening circumstances—and the final success of the American arms under his auspices—may well be attributed in part to his manly prayers, and pious trust in an overruling Providence. 'Tis true that great matters were at stake in those times, and calculated to drive us to our knees; and so it is now; but, if it were not so, we have no reason to doubt but that GOD will regard us in the day "of small things," nor forget at any time those who humbly call upon Him, since he has declared that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without Him," and that he "will ever temper the wind to the shorn lamb."

Therefore, my dear young friend, do not omit in your youth and manhood, when all things are apparently smooth and prosperous to you to offer with constancy, faith, and devotion, the sacrifices of prayer, thanksgivings, and praise, to Him who is the author of all your blessings, that you may not be "ashamed in the evil time" of misfortune, war, bereavement, sickness, old age, temptation and trial; and your own short experience has told you how numerous, treacherous, and powerful, the temptations to which a soldier is *every day* and *hour* exposed. We are about to part, perhaps never to meet again in this world; let my last words be then impressed upon you as the legacy of a *poor*, old veteran, as to this world's goods, to the son of departed friends. The Bible is like a golden mine; prayer is the only instrument by which its treasures may be dug and brought to light, and what now is more rational, more suitable to a dependent and accountable creature than to supplicate and worship his Almighty Creator!

Sold. Ere we part, accept my best thanks, my good, old friend, for your patience and perseverance in endeavoring to instruct one as ignorant and wilful as myself. Your remarks, at once so clear and so true, and so charitably urged on one, I fain hope will not be lost upon me. I am determined, as God shall help me, whatever my comrades may say, no longer to despise and neglect the Bible, but attentively to read it; and hope I shall never be ashamed hereafter to follow the example of so brave a soldier, so great and good a man, so true a patriot, as George Washington; and to kneel in prayer to God who made, who preserveth, who hath redeemed, and who will finally judge me. I hope we may again meet, and renew our interesting discourse.

Serg. Most heartily say I Amen to this. I am not worthy of so much commendation, since, when I have done all, I am "still an unprofitable servant," and have only done my bounden duty; but I am thankful we have met, and pray that God will bless those truths I have uttered in His name for want of a better spokesman; because they are those He has himself, in mercy and compassion to our proud and ignorant race, caused to be promulgated in his blessed Word. 'Farewell.

"Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

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